

10/10/75

Dean Rich

Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics

Dear Clay,

I have a copy of your letter of October 6th to Bob Butler about accounting procedures; and this was also quite pertinent to your applauding remarks about the quality of administrative support that we have in the Medical School and which was exemplified by the outcome of the recent negotiations on cost reimbursement!

I know that you do not perceive me to be in the camp of administrator-baiters and I certainly share your approval and appreciation for the quality of the recent effort!

If the purpose of your letter was to get some quotable remarks that could correctly and appropriately help to reward our colleagues in this area, I hope my letter has already served that purpose.

We are aware of the tensions that arise between the different lines of authority and responsibility in an academic institution, and have discussed them in the past in more abstract terms. Certainly we need the highest quality of administrative talent and insight that we can recruit and it is no help to be panning the people who work so hard to support the fundamental academic effort to which we are all dedicated.

The only further comment that I can think to make in response to your letter is to note that it is hardly surprising that the mailman is sometimes pummelled for bringing bad news; and the administrative officer is often in that position. I think my academic colleagues are not always as mature as one would hope in recognizing those distinctions.

On the other hand, I think that under the pressures that arise from various sources, I have to remark that our administration is not always as sensitive as it might be to the impact on our day-to-day work of the passive transmission of the rules and regulations and other irks that come in from Washington and other sources. As indicated in my note about accounting procedures, I would hope to elicit a bit more attention to looking for ways in which these external pressures might be ameliorated by more creative responses on the part of our internal operating management; this is not always the same as the tidiest managerial package or the easiest and automatic response to external pressures.

Personnel is almost inevitably one of the obvious scapegoats in the current climate and I know that you have taken steps to try to improve the material content of concerns in that direction. Other problems arise more from university sources than from within the Medical School in matters like tracking the current stages of available funds and things of that sort. I do not think any of these are new issues for you but this seemed like a reasonable point at which to recapitulate them.

Sincerely yours,